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DEPT FOR WHA/AND, S/CT AND PM/PPA (JKNOCH AND SKWAK)
SOUTHCOM FOR KSTALEY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/29/2019
TAGS: [MARR](#) [MASS](#) [MOPS](#) [KTIA](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PE](#)
SUBJECT: PERU: SUPPLEMENTAL TO FY'10 1206 COUNTER-IED
PROPOSAL

REF: STATE 92407

Classified By: Ambassador P. Michael McKinley for
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1.(S/NF) Summary: This telegram provides the Ambassador's confirmation and additional input in support of Embassy Lima's recent proposal for FY 200 1206 funding to establish a Counter-Improvised Explosive Device (C-IED) program in Peru. The proposal is designed to boost Peru's capacity to conduct counter-terrorism operations against the Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso - SL) terrorist organization, mainly in the Apurimac-Ene River Valley (VRAE). SL is making effective use of home-made, but increasingly-sophisticated IEDs and booby traps, which are now causing the bulk of the casualties in the VRAE. Embassy believes that the GOP is finally demonstrating the political will necessary for a decisive push against the SL in the VRAE. A robust C-IED program is essential to its campaign and is likely to yield valuable lessons-learned on C-IEDs as well as other fighting tactics that can be applied elsewhere to save American lives. The requested funding amount for the project is: \$2,500,000.00. End Summary.

SL Terrorist Threat

12. (S/NF) Although SL is often labeled as a "terrorist remnant" -- a term that can easily belie the danger behind the incremental resurgence of Latin America's most brutal and fanatical terrorist organization, which is responsible for the majority of the estimated 69,000 killed in Peru during the insurgency of the 1980s and 1990s. Despite the tendency by some to dismiss the still small SL VRAE faction ("PROSEGUIR") as little more than narcotraffickers, several prominent local analysts argue convincingly that this faction maintains definite political (Maoist/Communist) aims more akin to a genuine terrorist organization than drug smugglers. The analysts believe that SLs primary goal is to create a liberated area in the VRAE where it can govern in the vacuum created by the lack of state presence. There is no doubt that the SL has adopted a "kindlier, gentler" approach towards the local population. In the VRAE, SL prefers to bribe peasants

and local officials, rather than to terrorize them and even execute them, as they did in the past.

13. (S/NF) Other analysts contend that the VRAE SL may even compete for municipal offices in the next local elections. VRAE SL reportedly complements its military efforts in the VRAE with political work by cadres operating in the capital of Ayacucho region and with an extensive propaganda effort that has adopted strident anti-US rhetoric. We also note that some analysts here believe that SL in the Upper Huallaga Valley (UHV) and SL in the universities and slums of Lima merely pretend to be at odds with SL in the VRAE, but are actually following the Marxist doctrine of "talking and fighting" in order to confuse the enemy and while SL continue its protracted struggle in the "long war." The fact is, no one really knows for sure about SL's long term objectives or how it spends its money, but given SL's bloody track record, we should safely assume the worst from a group that espouses the violent overthrow of Peru's democratically-elected government.

14. (S/NF) According to SL VRAE's own writings and latest doctrine, it now considers the USA to be its "number one enemy", and it is willing to broaden its support with other radical groups or narcotraffickers, peasants and corrupt officials in order to achieve its goals. SL has scored an impressive series of military successes against the security forces over the last 16 months it has killed more than 51 soldiers and 25 policemen, though most of the latter in the UHV, where SL's "Acuerdista" faction operates. Many of the casualties in the VRAE are caused by command-detonated IED's or home made anti-personnel blast mines and mines are

sometimes planted in coca fields in the UHV to dissuade coca eradication. Some experts, such as Army General Carlos Paz, head of the counter-mine unit DIGEDEHUME has told us that SL is increasingly resorting to electronic timers and triggering devices to actuate its IEDs and booby traps. The IEDs and booby traps are having a significant negative impact on the morale of the infantry soldiers who patrol the VRAE's rugged mountain/jungle terrain.

15. (S/NF) Significant Incidents

-- September 2, 2009, near the town of Sinaycocha, Santo Domingo de Acobamba District, Huancayo Province in Junin Region: SL forces downed a Peruvian air force (FAP) MI-17 helicopter and reportedly killed its pilot, co-pilot and one crewman on the ground. SL blew up the aircraft after removing its crew-served weapons and ammunition and then booby-trapped the area. The rescue operation of a nearby pinned down patrol was hampered by heavy small arms fire and IEDs and booby traps implanted in the area.

-- April 9, 2009 Sanabamba, Ayacucho region: SL terrorists ambushed two military patrols in the Vizcatan region of the VRAE and killed thirteen soldiers. SL launched the ambush by remotely detonating an improvised explosive device (IED) on the side of a hill in the path of two military patrols. After the explosion caused a rockslide that crushed some of the soldiers in the lead patrol, the SL column attacked the survivors with gunfire and grenades. Twelve of sixteen troops in the lead patrol died in the initial battle. The second patrol soon caught up and repelled the guerrillas, losing one soldier in the combat.

-- On October 9, 2008, at "Curva Sajona" in northern Huancavelica Region: SL triggered a remotely activated explosive device underneath a Peruvian Army truck returning soldiers to a nearby base at Cochabamba Grande. The attackers then opened fire from both sides of the road, killing 14 soldiers and 7 civilians. Several others were wounded, three of them critically. It was the deadliest Sendero attack since the 1992 capture of Sendero founder Abimael Guzman.

Receptivity

¶16. (S/NF) Senior Peruvian Armed Forces and civilian leadership have expressed high interest in the C-IED Center and program described in our 1206 request. The Commander of Peru's Joint Command (equivalent to our Chairman of the JCS) has directly approached the Ambassador and the Chief of MAAG on this subject, and C-IED has been a topic of intense interest at lower levels of engagement.

Comment

¶17. (S/NF) There are encouraging signs that the GOP may have finally realized that its internal threat from the SL in the VRAE is a more clear and present danger than some hypothetical, conventional threat from Chile or Bolivia. As a recent Flag officer put it, "We don't want to wind up like Colombia or Mexico." At this point, the incremental growth of SL activities, and of the growing ties with drug traffickers, is not on a scale with either Colombia or Mexico. However, we don't want to get into a similar situation given the history of SL in Peru. While we work with our host nation counterparts to support their intelligence, rotary wing and ground operations needs for the VRAE campaign, the establishment of a Counter-Improvised Explosive Device (C-IED) program stands out as a timely, pragmatic and cost-effective solution to a very real battlefield problem. We also believe that our engagement is likely to yield valuable lessons-learned on IEDs, mines and booby traps, as we capture Peru's past experiences in the 1995 Cenepa War

with Ecuador and its internal struggle against SL and MRTA as well as the current campaign in the VRAE. We hope that decision makers will evaluate our 1206 proposal favorably.

End Comment.

MCKINLEY